



Stop criticising Libya – Carm Mifsud Bonnici

Home Minister defends southern neighbour after attacks by PN exponents

RAPHAEL VASSALLO

JUSTICE and Home Affairs Carm Mifsud Bonnici yesterday launched an impassioned plea in parliament – apparently aimed at the Opposition, but understood to also refer to officials within his own Nationalist Party – to desist from criticising Libya over its questionable handling of the immigration phenomenon.

Speaking on the second and final day of the immigration debate, Mifsud Bonnici urged Libya's detractors to moderate their tone. "It is a mistake to speak out against Libya in this issue," he said in response to Joseph Muscat's 20-point action plan, presented in parliament yesterday. "We recognise that immigration is also a problem for Libya, and we are doing our bit by putting pressure on Europe to offer more aid to Libya to help it control its borders."

His plea came only days after Nationalist MEP candidate Dr Frank Portelli

launched a stinging attack on Libya's role in the ongoing human trafficking racket behind irregular immigration; and also after government backbencher Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando repeatedly urged the government to act tougher with its neighbour to the south.

These and other comments from Nationalist Party sources are understood to be the cause of diplomatic tension between the two governments, resulting in the minister responsible for immigration taking the opportunity to publicly praise Libya for its efforts to bring the situation under control.

But the bulk of Mifsud Bonnici's intervention was aimed at defending his own government's track record, under attack by Opposition leader Joseph Muscat, who claimed on Monday that "not enough" was being done about immigration.

"I am surprised the Opposition leader, in his 19-point plan, forgot to include important

page 4 ▶



Court rejects Portelli's surcharge protest against Enemalta

page 9 ▶

Flamingo

Italian Design Sofas



30% OFF
on
KITCHENS,
BEDROOMS,
SOFAS & UNITS,
DINING ROOMS &
OFFICE FURNITURE